(d) if so, the details thereof and by when Government are likely to receive such opinion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government decided on 5th February, 2002 to effect complete decontrol of sugar after operationalisation of futures/forward trading in sugar in 2002-03.

(c) and (d) The Government have decided to set up a Group of Experts for examining the sugar economy in the light of the following and for coming up with options available for action required.

(i) the present regulations and controls, production and consumption patterns, overall agricultural growth and the food security scenario;

(ii) the augmentation in sugarcane crushing and refining capacities, and the need to tap the emerging opportunities in the energy opportunities in the energy and cogeneration sectors; and

(iii) sustainability considerations, keeping in view, particularly, the water intensive nature of sugarcane cultivation and the need for enhancing efficiencies in irrigation systems.

Supply of Wheat in Grain Market

†4019. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that supply of Wheat in the Grain Markets of the country has been lesser than the last year's supply;

(b) if so, the details in the regard and whether it is also a fact that minimum support price of wheat for current year has been fixed more than that of last years's price;

(c) whether it is also a fact that yield of wheat is more this year in comparison to last year's yield; and

(d) if so, the reasons for lesser inflow of wheat in the grain markets?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The arrivals of wheat in the mandis is 112.74 lakh tonnes in Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2007-08 on 7.5.2007 as compared to 124.91 lakh tonnes of arrivals in the corresponding periods in RMS 2006-07.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat was fixed at Rs. 750 per quintal for RMS 2007-08, an increase of Rs. 100 per quintal over and above the MSP is also being given this year compared to Rs. 50 per quintal given last year.

(c) Yes, Sir. According to the Third Advance Estimates of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, the estimated production of wheat is likely to be 73.70 million tonnes in crop year 2006-07 (to be marketed in RMS 2007-08) compared to 69.35 million tonnes in crop year 2005-06.

(d) Since harvesting of wheat in major wheat producing States in RMS 2007-08 was later than last year, market arrivals were also late. In RMS 2007-08, substantial harvesting of wheat in Punjab & Haryana has been done manually while in previous years the harvesting was done by using combined harvestors, resulting in slower market arrivals.

Contract for import of wheat

†4020. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of wheat for which contract for import was given to public sector companies like STC and MMTC for 2006-07 alongwith the rate and dates on which such contracts were given;

(b) whether Government have exempted private companies also for importing duty free wheat and on which date such decision was taken;

(c) the reasons for exempting private companies for importing duty free wheat; and

(d) the quantum of wheat imported by such private companies and the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.